

February 1, 2011

House of Representative, 2011 Montana Legislature  
Representative Elsie Arntzen, Chair, Business and Labor Committee  
State Capitol, Room 172

Ms. Chairwoman, Members of the Committee,

Good morning, my name is Ray Ruffatto. I live in Kalispell, Montana. I was born in Montana, and have lived in Montana all my life. For the past 23 years (over half my life), I have been involved in emergency services. I began this journey as a volunteer firefighter in Bozeman where I also worked for a private ambulance company, was the Director of Emergency Medical Services (ambulance service) in West Yellowstone, worked for the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services, EMS and Injury Prevention Section here in Helena, and am currently a firefighter for the City of Kalispell where I've been now for almost seven years. I am writing this letter in support of HB320, an act adding a firefighter to the Board of Medical Examiners.

As you may know, the 600 plus career firefighters in the State of Montana provide emergency response to over half of our state's population. Over the years, as the nature of the fire business in Montana has changed, so to have the expectations of firefighters. Today, about 70 percent of the calls we respond to are medical illness or injury related. In order to provide our customers, who are your constituents, the highest level of service on their worst day, most firefighters have obtained pre-hospital care provider training and licensure as EMTs or Paramedics.

As the majority of our "work" as career firefighters in providing emergency response to over half of Montana's people is regulated by the Board of Medical Examiners, it is critical that we stay involved and informed regarding pre-hospital issues. The best way for us to accomplish this is to have a representative of the career fire service seated at the Board of Medical Examiners table.

Thank you for the work you're doing here in Helena, and thank you for our support of HB320. If you have any questions, I may be reached via the contact information below.

Respectfully submitted,

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